**Community groups back latest campaign that urges people not to ignore persistent tummy troubles**

People with persistent tummy troubles (for more than three weeks) including diarrhoea, bloating or discomfort in the tummy area, are being urged to get checked for cancer as part of the NHS Public Health England’s ‘Help Us, Help You’ campaign. The call out is being backed by a number of community organisations including the Caribbean and African Health Network, and Ghana Nurses Association.

Recent research found that more than four in ten people would leave it longer to get health advice than they normally would have before the coronavirus outbreak¹, however delaying can have serious consequences for some cancers. Figures show that abdominal cancers account for 25% of all cancer diagnoses in England and 30% of all cancer deaths².

While there was a dip in referrals for these cancers at the peak of the first COVID wave, more people are now coming forward for checks³.

**CEO of Caribbean and African Health Network, Charles Kwaku-Odoi** said: “Many of us will ignore day to day discomfort, but when it’s lasting more than three weeks – it’s likely that your body is trying to tell you something. The NHS has put many measures in place to see you safely, and we urge members of the public not to ignore their health. Look out for yourself and your loved ones – speak to a GP.”

Hospitals have put extensive measures in place so that patients can get safely tested and treated, including by rolling out COVID protected hubs across the country and introducing treatment swaps that require fewer trips to hospital and have less of an effect on cancer patients’ immune systems.

England’s Top GP has said people should not hesitate to get in touch with their GP if they have concerns and reassured the public that local health services have plans in place so people can continue to get tests and treatment.

**Dr Nikki Kanani, GP and medical director for primary care for NHS England, said**: “If you or a loved one has one of these symptoms, please don’t ignore them. Our message to you is clear – you are not a burden and we are here to safely treat you so please don’t delay – help us help you and come forward as you usually would for care.

“Cancer is easier to treat when it is caught at an earlier stage and so coming forward for a check could save your life.”

Search nhs.uk/cancersymptoms for more information.

*¹Kantar data – A representative sample of 2,178 adults were asked about their attitudes to seeking medical help at the current time (September 2020), compared to what they would have done before the coronavirus outbreak in March 2020*

*² Office of National Statistics (2019). Mortality statistics - underlying cause, sex and age. Available:* <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/query/construct/summary.asp?mode=construct&version=0&dataset=161>*. Last accessed October 2020.*

*³NHS England (2020): Cancer Waiting Times. Available: https://www.england.nhs.uk/statistics/statistical-work-areas/cancer-waiting-times/. Last accessed: October 2020.*